

"MAMIE IS DYING."

The Touching Message Ticked Out by the Telegraph on Christmas Eve.

"Mamie is dying."

These were the words that the telegraph key clicked upon the silence that had fallen upon the station of which John Heathcote was in charge. It was Christmas eve, and for nearly four hours the man had sat there, the only occupant of the little room in which his business as telegraph operator and depot master was transacted. He had listened in a mechanical sort of a way to the messages that were flashing over the wires—orders concerning the movements of trains, brief commercial messages, telling in terse language the state of the markets in all parts of the world, Christmas greetings from friends and relatives who sought to make separation less painful by an interchange of kindly words and sentiments—and in the midst of them all came those three words to his office—three little words that meant sorrow and desolate hearts in some household on the morrow, the day when peace and joy and good will should reign everywhere supreme.

And so, as John Heathcote placed the message in an envelope and sent it by his office-boy to an address with which he was not familiar, there was, perhaps, the suspicion of a tear glistening in his honest eye, and mayhap the hand that penned the address trembled a little, for he had wife and children of his own, had John Heathcote, and it came to him with awful force how cheerless his life would be were one of his little pairs of arms that each morning twined so lovingly around his neck to be folded across a heart that was stilled forever, and the deep brown eyes be closed in the dreamless sleep of death.

And while he was thus still thinking there came again the nervous click of the instrument, and as he answered the call he felt instinctively that the message he was to receive would bring more bad news. And he was right.

"Mamie is dead; I will be home in the morning," were the words that came to him over the wires, and then the tears in honest John Heathcote's eyes were plain enough, and he was not ashamed that he had wept at the sorrows of people all unknown to him.

When the morning train from the west came thundering into the little town where John Heathcote lived, he was standing upon the platform. His hours of duty had ended some time before, but he could not bear to leave until he had seen the man whose name was signed to the dispatches of the previous night. A sleigh came to the depot, and the driver had said incidentally that he was to meet Jones. When the train arrived a weary-looking man stepped from one of the cars, and the driver of the sleigh approached him. John Heathcote was standing within a few feet of them.

"Good morning, Mr. Jones," said the driver.

"Good morning, John."

"So Mamie is dead?" asked the man.

"Yes," was the reply, in low, agitated tones, "and she would have beaten 2:20 next season."

John Heathcote went away.—Chicago Tribune.

Thought His Time Had Come.

Montezuma Weekly.

For twenty years, an old man of our country, whom we will call Jack Baldwin, has cultivated the soil, and drawn therefrom support for himself and his wife; he is childless. Not long since Jack left his house in search of a missing cow. His route led him through an old worn-out piece of clay land of about six acres in extent, in the center of which was a wall about thirty feet deep that at some time had probably furnished the inmates of a dilapidated house near by with water. In passing the spot an ill wind drifted Jack's hat from his head and maliciously wafted it to the edge of the well and it tumbled in. Now, Jack had always practiced the virtue of economy, and he immediately set about recovering his hat. He ran to the well, and finding that it was dry at the bottom he unrolled the rope which he had brought for the purpose of capturing the cow, and after several attempts to catch the hat with a noose, he concluded to save time by going down into the well himself. To accomplish this he made fast one end of the rope to a stump hard by, and was soon on his way down into the well.

It was a fact of which Jack was less oblivious than the reader hereof—that a mischievous fellow, whom we will call Neal Willis, was in the old building and saw Jack go down into the well, and it so happened that Jack's old blind horse was near by with a bell on his neck. The devil himself or some wicked spirit, put it into Neal's

up to the old horse, unbuckled the strap and approached the well with the bell in his hand, ting-a-ling. Jack thought the old horse was coming, and said in an audible tone:

"Hang the old blind horse; he's comin' this way, sure, and he ain't got no more sense than to fall in here on me—wo, Ball!" But the sound of the bell came closer, and Jack was resting at the bottom of the well. "Great Jerusalem!" said Jack; "the old blind fool will be right on top of me in a minute—wo, haw, Ball!"

Just then Neal got close to the well and kicked a little dirt on Jack's head. Jack thought Ball was about to come, got close to the side of the well and began to pray:

"Oh, Lord, have mercy on—wo, Ball—a poor sinner—I'm gone now—wo, Ball—Our Father who art in—wo, Ball—heaven, hallowed be Thy—jee! Ball, jee! what'll I do?—name. Now I lay me down to sl—jee, Ball, out of your livers! (just then, in fell more dirt) back, Ball. Oh, Lord, if you ever intend to do anything for me—back, Ball, wo, ho!—Thy kingdom come—jee, Ball—Oh, Lord, you know I was baptised in Smith's mill dam—wo, Ball, ho! up! murder! wo—farewell world."

Neal could hold in no longer, and showed himself at the top of the well, with a big horse laugh which might have been heard two miles. This was more than Jack could bear and he started up the rope like a monkey.

"Damn your picture, I'll give you fits; I'll make your ears ring worse 'an that bell."

Neal took to his heels and ran like a quarter horse, and the last that was seen of him he was half a mile from the well, with two big dogs grabbing at his coat and Jack close behind.

A Tragic Game of Poker.

Evening Telegraph.

I remember one time when we were on our way to New Orleans on a Mississippi river steamboat. Bill and I set up a game in the main saloon. The play used to be kept up pretty much all day, and sometimes we would win or lose several thousand dollars in a day. The game was at its briskest in the evening, after dinner, when most of the boys were more or less full of wine, and were sometimes very heavy. Well, one night we were just going to sit down to the table, the lamps were lighted and two new decks of cards were broken, when a little fellow, with a big mustache, who said he was a Kentuckian, asked to join the game, as he wanted to learn it. He showed a big roll of money, and we assented, thinking we had caught a regular sucker. We hadn't been playing half an hour when Bill on the stranger's deal, got four kings pat, and started off by raising the pot \$100, the ante being \$50. The pool mounted up to over \$5,000 before the draw, and, much to his surprise, Bill simply called the first bet of \$500, and the hands were then shown. The stranger had scarce time to lay down four aces on the table when Bill raised one of his coat tails in his hand, and discharged the revolver through the pocket. The stranger threw up his hands, half rose from his chair, and, with a moan, fell forward on the table, knocked over the lamp, and then tumbled back on the floor stone dead. Of course the excitement was tremendous; revolvers were drawn, and a general panic ensued. Bill never lost his nerve for a second. Says he:

"Gentlemen, just let me explain this little matter. The man held four aces, and here is one I discarded from my own hand. I never saw a deck of cards with two aces of spades, and I'll swear that the deck was all right when I counted at the beginning of the game, and so will my friend here (meaning me). And if you want any more evidence, look here;" and with that he yanked off the Kentuckian's false mustache, and who should the stranger be but Chipper Jim, a noted skin and desperado. We made up a committee to chuck the body overboard. One of the queerest parts of the whole business was when we came to count the stamps; the half of it was counterfeit money.

—Günner Mirror: The day when a home can be bought in Texas for a song is rapidly passing away. The great rush of immigration and the native increase is swelling our population double every decade. As the population increases, the surplus land grows scarce. At a day not in the dim future a home will be planted on almost every quarter of a mile square in our great state. A home is valuable, and the emigrants in five years hence will have to pay more than a penny to become a citizen and resident of Texas. Hence it is very plain that investments in land are more valuable than investments in bonds.

To save a dollar is the easiest thing in the world—don't spend it.

Can a Clergyman Marry Himself?

A queer legal question—Can a man marry himself?—has come up recently in the Irish courts, and has attracted much attention from its novelty. The facts that gave rise to the matter are these:

Some years ago Rev. Samuel Beamish, of Cork, being then in charge of a congregation, went to the house of a milliner in that city, and under its roof, and in a private apartment, sought a sentimental interview with a young and comely apprentice, Isabella Fraza, and then and there performed the marriage ceremony between her and himself. No one was present except the couple in question, and it was thought that nobody had witnessed the peculiar wedding; but it was shown that a servant, Catherine Coffey, had seen what had occurred, through a window from an adjoining back yard, having been drawn thither by sheer curiosity. Catherine had not heard the words or observed the forms used on the occasion—the ceremony was the one prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer—but she had carefully watched as a woman would be likely to watch such a proceeding—all that was going on. Isabella Frazer, some time after, gave birth to a son, and three years after the clergyman died intestate. He left considerable property, and his brother contended that, as the marriage had been illegal the child was illegitimate, and could not inherit from his father. It would seem that Beamish had not intended to make Isabella his wife, but had performed the nuptial ceremony merely to satisfy her scruples. The case occupied the Courts three years; but it has finally been decided that the marriage was valid, at least in Ireland. Under the circumstances this would certainly seem to be a righteous decision.

"NEVER would call a boy of mine 'Alias,' said Mrs. Jones, of Huntsville Ala., 'if I had a hundred to name Men by that name is allus cuttin' up capers. Here's Alias Thompson, Alias Williams, Alias the Night-hawk—all been took up for stealin'."

A Wisconsin editor has on hand twelve liver pads, 200 bottles of stomach bitters, twelve bottles of hair-dye, twenty-four bottles of cough medicine, three trusses and two wooden legs, and he advertises for a partner to help start a drug store.

"What shall I tell people who ask whether you are engaged?" said a young lady at the dinner table to a somewhat eccentric theological student at Andover. "Tell them you don't know," was the reply.

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That BROWN'S IRON BITTERS will cure the worst case of dyspepsia.

Will insure a hearty appetite and increased digestion.

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Respectfully Yours,
P. S.—You will not publish my name but persons visiting you may be referred to me and I will answer them.
To every young, middle age or old man troubled with nervous or physical debility or impotence sealed circular is sent free. Send full address on postal card to HARRIS REMEDY CO., St. Louis, Mo. We want your address. You need our remedy. Send and be convinced of this.

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